

# opc Bulletin

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE OVERSEAS PRESS CLUB OF AMERICA, NEW YORK, NY • November 2009

## American Journalists to Recount Fall of Berlin Wall

### **EVENT PREVIEW: NOVEMBER 9**

by Sonya K. Fry

On the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, Monday, November 9 at 6 p.m., the OPC has assembled a prestigious panel of American journalists with the German Consulate hosting the panel and reception at the German House, 871 United Nations Plaza, at 49th Street, on the second floor.

A panel of authors, reporters and photographers who have written extensively about modern Germany will tell their eye-witness stories, their near misses, and their reflections on the end of Communism in eastern Europe beginning with the fall of the Berlin Wall.

If you ask an American about the assassination of President John Kennedy or the terrorist attacks of 9/11 you will get a flood of stories about where they were on each of those fateful days. If you ask a German about the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989 they will regale you with stories about where they were, how they missed the event, how surprised they were to hear that the wall was being breached. Stories just come pouring out of them in a great torrent.

Since journalism is all about well-told stories, the OPC is gathering a group of American eyewitnesses to the fall of the

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People sitting on the wall with the East German troops below in 1989. This photo was taken by David Burnett, who will participate in the discussion at the German Consulate.

## *Journalism's Roving Eye on Review at AP*

### **EVENT PREVIEW: NOVEMBER 10**

by Sonya K. Fry

*Journalism's Roving Eye: A History of American Foreign Reporting* by John Maxwell Hamilton, Dean of theanship School of Mass Communication at Louisiana State, is an ambitious and audacious project. Maxwell writes a sweeping history of American foreign news reporting from the colonial era — when newspaper printers hustled down to wharfs to collect mail and periodicals from incoming ships — to the multimedia coverage of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. He chronicles the technological advances of the printing presses to satellite phones and how these changes have influenced reporting itself. As well, he writes about the cavalcade of colorful

personalities whose reporting has shaped how America views the world. *Journalism's Roving Eye* is a tome on the evolution of foreign news gathering.

Some very interesting facts emerge from this book: Karl Marx contributed almost five hundred articles on the European scene to Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune* between 1852 and 1861. This was after Marx had published the *Communist Manifesto* and was working on *Das Kapital*. Greeley also employed America's first female foreign correspondent, Margaret Fuller, who reported on the siege of Rome by French forces during the Revolution of 1848.

This comprehensive history deals with all the battles of the newsrooms,

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## Berlin Wall Event Preview: (Continued From Page 1)

Wall 20 years ago. They will also reflect on how German reunification has changed Germany, what challenges a unified Germany still faces twenty years later, and what role a stronger German state is playing in Europe and on the world stage.

**Roger Cohen** (Moderator), columnist for *The New York Times* and the *International Herald Tribune*, was Berlin bureau chief for the *Times* in 1998 to 2001 and while there wrote extensively about the Tenth Anniversary of the fall of the Wall. He has received numerous German awards including the Peter Weitz Prize from the German Marshall Fund and the Arthur F. Burns Prize from the German Foreign Ministry for commentary on German-American relations.

**Tim Aepfel**, foreign correspondent based in Bonn, covered the turbulent times leading up to and after the opening of the Berlin Wall for *The Wall Street Journal*. He was in East Berlin the night of November 9, 1989 and is possibly the only U.S. journalist to walk through Checkpoint Charlie with the East Germans.

**David Burnett**, photojournalist and co-founder of Contact Press Images, winner of the OPC's 1973 Robert Capa Gold Medal Award and this year named one of the "100 Most Important People in Photography" by *American Photo* magazine. Even though he arrived in Berlin on November 10th, a day late, his pictures captured the essence of the tension and the exuberance of the smashing of the Wall.

**Michael Meyer**, from 1988 to 1992 *Newsweek's* Bonn/Berlin bureau chief covering the collapse of the Berlin Wall and German reunification. Author of *The Year That Changed the World: The Untold Story of the Fall of the Berlin Wall* published in September. He is currently Director of Communications for the Secretary General of the United Nations.

**Elizabeth Pond**, writer and lecturer on international affairs. Author of *Beyond the Wall: Germany's Road to Unification* (1993) and writer of an article for *The Christian Science Monitor* (10/8/09) titled "The Berlin Wall: What Really Made it Fall."



Scenes of the fall of the Berlin Wall captured by photojournalist and panelist David Burnett.



Pond was the recipient of the 2004 Federal Cross of Merit award from the Federal Republic of Germany.

Reservations are essential. Please call the OPC office at 212-626-9220 or e-mail [boots@opcofamerica.org](mailto:boots@opcofamerica.org) to put your name and the name of a guest on the reservation list. Also bring a photo ID to get through building security.

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# Post-Apocalyptic McCarthy Novel Set to Screen

**EVENT PREVIEW: OCTOBER 29**

by Sonya K. Fry

The OPC is most lucky to have a private screening of the highly anticipated adaptation of the Pulitzer Prize winning novel, *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy. The film has an all-star cast led by Viggo Mortensen of *Lord of the Rings* fame, Charlize Theron and Robert Duvall.

*The Road* is an epic post-apocalyptic tale of the survival of a father and his young son as they journey across a barren America that was destroyed by a mysterious cataclysm more than ten years ago. The Man and The Boy — “each other’s world entire” as McCarthy describes them in his novel — are on the move with all their worldly possessions. They are unwashed bodies foraging for food, encountering a desolate terrain, despicable people, cannibals and other horrors, but this adventure story is ultimately a love story between a father and son, between a man and wife and a celebration of the inextinguishable will to live.

The Director John Hillcoat has created a frighteningly barren world virtually devoid of color, where everything is covered with fine gray ash and even the seas have become gray. Occasional flashbacks to pre-disaster life offer momentary visual respites of color, music and warmth.

From a review of the film at the Venice Film Festival by Xan Brooks on the guardian.co.uk: “...*The Road* paints a brutal portrait of a dying planet stalked by starving, desperate men. And yet there is tenderness here too, and it shows its hand in the subtle, moving interplay between the two main characters. Mortensen is perfectly cast as the gaunt, wasted hero while Smit-McPhee (the son) copes well with a demanding role as his soulful offspring, forever willing to



Kodi Smit-McPhee and Viggo Mortensen star in *The Road*, based on Cormac McCarthy's Pulitzer Prize winning novel.

share his meager meal. Although they walk together, we have the sense that these two are ultimately headed in opposite directions. Born into the old world...the father starts out strong and then begins to fade. Born into the new, his son grows in stature and picks up the baton. He presses on down the road, hungry, filthy and wonderfully sane; a glimmer of hope for the human race.”

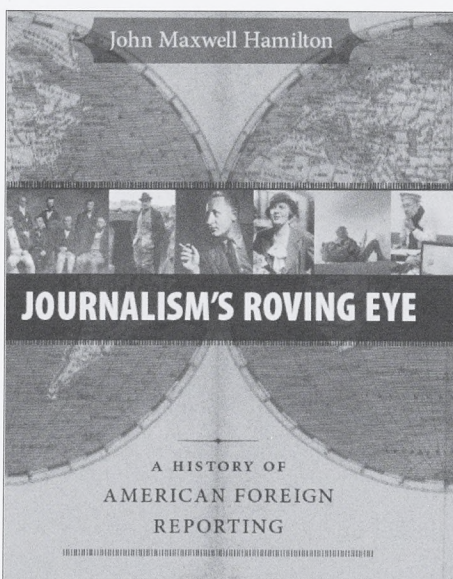
The award-winning Australian director John Hilcoat will be on hand at the end of the screening to discuss the film and answer questions.

The film will be shown at the Bryant Park Hotel, 40 West 40 Street in the screening room on the lower level on Thursday, October 29 at 7 p.m. Reservations are essential. Please call the OPC office at 212-626-9220 or e-mail [boots@opocofamerica.org](mailto:boots@opocofamerica.org)

## AP Book Night Preview: (Continued From Page 1)

the cut-backs on foreign reporting by news executives, what constitutes propaganda, increasingly sophisticated censorship, the future of print media and the problems created by new delivery systems.

In *The Dallas Morning News* review Philip Seib writes “As Hamilton shows throughout his book, difficulties affecting today’s foreign reporting are nothing new. News executives have always taken advantage of Americans’ insularity by cutting back on foreign coverage (and its costs) whenever possible. The result is a nation possessing vast power and vast ignorance about the rest of the world, a combination certain to create problems for the United States and other nations... Hamilton’s book should remind people of the richness of foreign reporting, and the value of such journalism in an era when we are all citizens



of the world.”

The OPC and the AP Corporate Archives are co-sponsoring this Book Night to be held on Tuesday, November 10 at 6 p.m. at the Associated Press headquarters, 450 West 33 Street (between 9th and 10th Avenues), in the Conference Center on the 15th floor. After the lecture by historian and author John Maxwell Hamilton, a panel led by AP Senior Managing Editor John Daniszewski will discuss the future of foreign reporting.

The evening will conclude with a light reception and book signing.

The AP has also agreed to give tours of its five-year-old headquarters and newsroom from 5 to 6 p.m. before the talks. Please RSVP by calling the

OPC office at 212-626-9220 or send an e-mail to [boots@opocofamerica.org](mailto:boots@opocofamerica.org)





## PEOPLE... with Al Kaff

GORDON CURRIE/BILL SHINN

### SCHOLARSHIP WINNER: Sheila

**Lalwani** is right at home in Berlin because she is fluent in German as well as Hindi and proficient in Arabic. Winner of the OPC Foundation's Irene Corbally Kuhn Scholarship last year, Lalwani now is a Fulbright fellow and journalist in Berlin. She is working on journalism projects relating to immigration. Lalwani, who earned a master's degree in public policy at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, won her OPC scholarship with an essay on honor killings in the German Turkish community, focusing on a young woman whose brothers murdered her for leaving a forced marriage.



Sheila Lalwani

**GLOBAL:** Violent killing of journalists go on. Acting on an anonymous telephone tip, police found the body of radio presenter **Fabián Ramírez López** hidden in the bushes in Mazatlán, Mexico on October 11, two days after he went missing. His throat had been slit, and the letters YTTS carved on his back. Since personal possessions of the late-night music and talk show host on radio station La Magia 97.1 were found with him, police do not suspect robbery was the motive.

Two days earlier, **Norberto Miranda Madrid**, 44, editor of Radio Visión's website was murdered by three hooded men who forced their way in to Radio Visión's office in Mexico's Chihuahua state, asked for Miranda and shot him when he identified himself. Miranda wrote op-ed articles under the pen name El Gallito (Little Rooster) including articles about local drug wars. Since 2000, 55 journalists have been killed in

Mexico, Reporters Without Borders reported.

**Bayo Ohu**, assistant news editor of the Nigerian daily *The Guardian*, was shot dead in his home by five gunmen September 20 while he was preparing to go to church. When Ohu opened the door to a knock, the killers fired at least eight bullets into him. The assailants escaped, one shouting, "The fool is dead."

**BAKU, Azerbaijan:** **Natig Mukhtarli**, a writer on the sport portal *famat.az*, and **Zahir Axamat**, the website's chairman, were sentenced to one year and six months in prison on October 7 for allegedly "insulting" the president of a local soccer club and accusing him of "committing a grave crime." The court ordered the journalists to pay Mais Masimov, president of the Khazar-Lankaran Football Club, 20 percent of their monthly salaries while they are in prison. They were sentenced under the penal code for "criticizing the financial management and leadership decision making" of the club's executive officer.

**BAIDOA, Somali:** Radical al-Shabab militants, who have controlled Baidoa since January, closed privately owned Radio Warsan September 30 and took into custody **Hilal Sheik Shueby**, the station's director, and its news editor, **Mohamed Aden Dhaysane**. A BBC correspondent said the station was accused of broadcasting "anti-Islamic" programs, particularly songs and music.

**BEIJING:** A correspondent, cameraman and assistant working for Kyodo News, Japan's national news agency, were attacked by Chinese authorities who stormed into their hotel room around 8 p.m. September 18, Kyodo reported. The agency said the newsmen were kicked, hit on their heads and made to kneel. The

assailants also tossed two computers out of the room, destroying them. The journalists were staying in the Beijing Hotel next to Tiananmen Square to cover a rehearsal for China's October 1 National Day parade. A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said the journalists violated regulations but did not specify which regulations. In a statement, the Foreign Correspondents' Club of China said several members received telephone calls warning them not to photograph or interview people in or near Tiananmen Square during the run-up to Communist China's 60th anniversary.



An issue of the *Dinamalar*

**CHENNAI, India:** **B. Lenin**, editor of the Tamil newspaper *Dinamalar*, was arrested on October 7 and sentenced to 15 days in "judicial custody" after his newspaper reported that a Tamil film actress had been arrested on prostitution charges. The article said the woman confessed and named other actresses involved in the sex trade. The newspaper printed their pictures. Lenin was granted bail two days later after local journalists demanded his release while members of the South India Film Artists Association thanked the chief minister of Tamil Nadu state for the arrest.

**ENGLEWOOD, Colorado:** OPC President **Allan Dodds Frank** is one of five media leaders who will judge the newly established Media for Liberty Award. Set up by Liberty Media Corporation, the \$50,000 award will be given for a print or electronic article that best explores "the link



between economic and political liberty." The competition is open to media outlets in print, radio, TV and websites any place in the world. Deadline

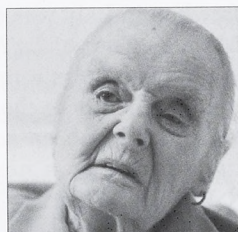


Allan Dodds Frank

is January 7, 2010; entry forms and rules can be found online at [www.libertymedia.com/mediaforlibertyaward](http://www.libertymedia.com/mediaforlibertyaward).

## HONG KONG: Clare

**Hollingworth**, who scooped the world on the start of World War II and is dean of foreign correspondents in Asia, celebrated her 98th birthday on October 9, when friends and colleagues gathered to toast her in the Foreign Correspondents' Club (FCC). In a reporting career that started in 1939, Hollingworth covered World War II and conflicts in Palestine, Algeria, China, Aden and Vietnam. She is the author of five books based on her reporting in Poland, World War II, Middle East, China and her memoirs. Hollingworth, now nearly blind, has lived in Hong Kong since the early 1980s. **Tony Lawrence**, the second oldest member of the FCC, came to Hong Kong for the BBC in 1955 and never left. He celebrated his 97th birthday in August.



Clare Hollingworth spoke to the AFP in Hong Kong in August.

## Loeb to Be Honored

In November, former OPC President **Marshall Loeb** will receive the Children's Humanitarian Award from The Children's Tumor Foundation, a non-governmental founder of research into neurofibromatosis. Now a senior consultant for MarketWatch, Marshall is a former managing editor of *Forbes* and *Money* magazines and former editor of the *Columbia Journalism Review*.

In 1939 when she was 28 and had worked for less than a week for London's *Daily Telegraph*, Hollingworth was sent to Poland to report on worsening tensions in Europe. On August 31, 1939, she was driving along the German-Polish border and chanced upon a massive buildup of Nazi German troops, tanks and armored cars facing Poland. The following morning, September 1, Hitler's forces invaded Poland, setting off World War II. Hollingworth called the British Embassy in Warsaw and her editor in London to report the German invasion of Poland. To convince doubtful embassy officials and her editor, Hollingworth held a telephone out of her hotel room window to capture the sounds of German forces. Her report was the first eyewitness account of the start of World War II.

Three years ago, Hollingworth sued her financial manager, **Ted Thomas**, a fellow member of the FCC, for removal of more than £150,000 (then nearly \$300,000) from her bank account. Thomas said the loss was due to investments but repaid half the money. Hollingworth was divorced from her first husband and widowed from her second husband.



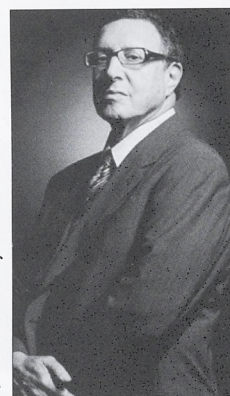
The Far Eastern Economic Review will stop publication in December.

*The Far Eastern Economic Review*, an English-language news magazine founded in 1946, will close in December after losing readers and advertising revenue. "The decision to cease publication of *The Review* is a difficult one made after a careful study of the magazine's prospects in a challenging business climate," **Todd Larsen**, chief operating officer at Dow Jones Consumer Media Group, said in a statement. Dow Jones bought

the magazine from its British owners in 1987. Originally a weekly, the magazine became a monthly in 2004 amid declining advertising revenue.

**MOSCOW:** Moscow district court ruled on October 13 that the *Novaya Gazeta* did not damage Josef Stalin's honor and dignity when the newspaper in an April article called him a "blood-thirsty cannibal" who sent thousands of people to their deaths. The libel suit was filed by Stalin's grandson, Yevgeny Dzhugashvili.

**NEW YORK:** Bloomberg news won the bid to purchase *BusinessWeek* from McGraw-Hill in October, and OPC member **Norman Pearlstine** will become chairman of the magazine. The magazine will be renamed *Bloomberg BusinessWeek*, and Pearlstine will be liaison between the two organizations. Pearlstine, a former editor at *The Wall Street Journal* and *Time*, joined Bloomberg last year as its chief content officer. In the deal expected to be finalized by year end, the magazine will be sold for nearly \$5 million plus assumption of some \$31.9 million in liabilities. With 930,000 circulation, *BusinessWeek* lost \$43 million last year and is estimated to lose between \$60 and \$80 million this year.



Norman Pearlstine in a photo taken for the *Vanity Fair* article "Bloomberg Without Bloomberg," December 2008.

*BusinessWeek* staffers include six OPC members: **Stephen Adler**, editor-in-chief; **Diane Brady**, senior editor; **Pete Engardio**, senior international news editor; **Rose Brady**, a senior editor in New York; **Stanley Reed**, London bureau chief; and **Geri Smith**, Mexico bureau chief. **Bill Holstein**, President of the OPC Foundation, was a *BusinessWeek* writer from 1985 to 1996 and served

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as the magazine's world editor.

Several days after the Bloomberg win was announced, **John Byrne**, 56, an executive editor of *BusinessWeek* and editor-in-chief of its website, BusinessWeek.com, and **Katherine Rodler**, 47, sales vice president for Loomia, an Internet software company in San Francisco, were married in St. Helena, California by a Universal Life minister. Byrne plans to relocate in San Francisco.

◆  
OPC member **Dan Rather**'s \$70 million lawsuit against CBS was dismissed by the appellate division of the New York State Supreme Court September 29. In his case filed in 2007, the former "CBS Evening News" anchor charged that the network breached his contract and tarnished his reputation by its investigation into his "60 Minutes II" report on President George W. Bush's National Guard record during the Vietnam War. The court's five-to-zero dismissal cited legal procedural errors. Rather's attorney said he will appeal the dismissal. *The New York Times* reported that the lawsuit cost Rather more than \$2 million up to last November.



Dan Rather

**NIAMEY, Niger:** Two Niger newsmen are in trouble. **Ibrahim Soumana Gaoh**, director of the weekly news magazine *Le Témoin*, was arrested September 20 on charges that he defamed the communications minister, Mohamed Ben Omar, that month in an article that implicated the minister in 2001 financial irregularities.



Ibrahim Soumana Gaoh

**Abdoulaye Tiémogo**, director of the satiric newspaper *Le Canard Déchainé*, went to prison in August on

a three-month sentence for "casting discredit on a judicial ruling" that involved former prime minister Hama Amadou.

**PARIS:** Dozens of reporters, photographers and bloggers have fled Iran or are trying to flee because of the government's crackdown on press coverage of riots that followed the disputed June presidential election, Reporters Without Borders reported. Hundreds of others including *Newsweek* correspondent **Maziar Bahari** (who was released October 17, see Teheran item), were arrested and jailed. Veteran journalist **Mahmoud Shamsolvaezin** estimated that 2,000 Iranian journalists have lost their jobs recently. "Journalists are leaving more than any other group because the government has closed newspapers and it has intimidated and terrorized them," he said in an interview. The government has closed at least six newspapers since the election.

◆  
**Isabelle Clary**, a former UPI correspondent in Indonesia and an out-of-work finance reporter in New York City and her son have moved to her native France, living in Paris, which she described as "a truly beautiful city." Isabelle is teaching culture through the movies at a private university. Her son Alex, 33, has resumed his biotech studies in Paris. In an e-mail, Clary, 59, wrote, "I knew from the start that this U.S. recovery would be protracted and jobless, which I could not afford."

**ROME:** Prime Minister **Silvio Berlusconi**, Italy's television and print mogul, is in the center of a storm. On October 3, an estimated 300,000 people demonstrated in a Rome public square in defense of press freedom, charging government interference on how the news is reported in Italy. A few days later, Italy's Constitutional Court struck down a law that gave Berlusconi immunity from prosecution on corruption charges. Also in October, Berlusconi's holding company, Fininvest, was fined \$1.1 billion for

allegedly bribing judges in the 1990s.

Earlier, the prime minister filed charges against four newspapers in Italy, France and Spain for articles about the alleged participation of young women and at least one prostitute at parties held by Berlusconi, 73. "If the king is naked, we should say he is naked," **Franco Siddi**, secretary-general of the Italian Press Federation, told the demonstrators. "That applies to everyone, even the premier." But the prime minister told a political convention, "Freedom is far greater in Italy than any other Western country." Other comments: Criticizing the demonstration, **Augusto Minzolini**, an editor on the state broadcaster Rai, called it "absurd" to think that press freedom in Italy was endangered. **Ezio Mauro**, editor of *La Repubblica*, one of the newspapers sued by the prime minister, "This is the first time that a politician has been so afraid of questions posed by a newspaper that he brought it to court."

In a *Newsweek* article titled "It's Time for Italy to Ditch Silvio," Paris bureau chief **Christopher Dickey**, an OPC member, wrote, "If he calls a new election, he's even popular enough to win... He works hard to make sure that good news is just about the only news Italians ever see, and since he controls all three state TV networks, three of the largest private channels, the country's largest publisher, and a weekly news magazine, he has the means to do it."

**SANA'A, Yemen:** **Mohammed al-Maqaleh**, editor of the El Eshtarak website, was abducted September 18 after he published a report on Yemeni air strikes that caused civilian casualties in northwestern Yemen. "Al-Maqaleh's abduction appears to be part of a crackdown by Yemeni authorities against journalists whose reporting on the conflict in northern Yemen has drawn the ire of the government," the International Press



Silvio Berlusconi



## ICFJ Awards 8 U.S. Journalists Chance to Go Abroad

Eight American journalists were selected this year by the International Center for Journalists to cover stories abroad of particular interest in their local communities, and will travel during October, November and December.

**Patrick Madden** of WAMU, National Public Radio's Washington station, teams with **Elahe Izadi** of *The Gazette*, a weekly newspaper in Prince George's County, Maryland, to explore the inner workings of the violent group Mara Salvatrucha, a street gang that operates in El Salvador and Washington.

**Philip Brasher**, the *Des Moines Register*, investigates the success of biotechnology in boosting food production in Kenya and South Africa.

**Timothy Elfrink**, Miami's weekly *New Times*, reports on connections between Asian manufacturers and Florida businesses, particularly in the construction and yachting industries.

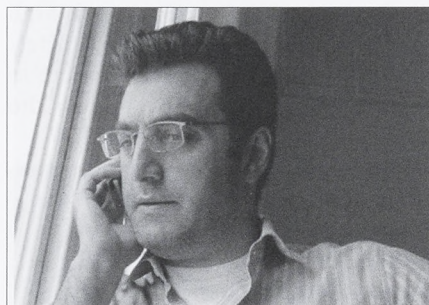
**Krista Kapralos**, the *Everett Herald* in Washington state, covers the work done by U.S.-based faith-based groups in Mali.

**Whit Richardson**, the bi-weekly newspaper *MaineBiz*, chronicles a Maine company's development of deep-water cages to commercially produce fish in Mexico and Panama.

**Maureen Sieh**, the *Syracuse Post-Standard* in upstate New York, follows several Sudanese refugees who are returning to their native land to reconstruct that war-torn land.

**Sunita Sohrabji** of *India-West*, a weekly newspaper serving Indian-American readers, probes the export of discarded electronic equipment from the U.S. to India to be salvaged for precious metals by poor people who are exposed to toxic hazards as they extract metal.

Institute said in a statement. Since May, three other Yemeni website editors have been arrested. The Yemeni military and Houthi rebels have been fighting for five years.



Maziar Bahari

**TEHERAN:** Maziar Bahari, a *Newsweek* correspondent and a filmmaker, was released from detention on October 17, four months after his arrest during demonstrations that followed Iran's disputed presidential election. Bahari, 42, an Iranian-Canadian, had traveled to Iran to cover the unrest. Iran's state-run news media said his family posted bail of about \$300,000. Along with about 100 other detainees, Bahari was put on trial in August on charges of being part of a plot to stage a "velvet revolution" against the government. No ver-

dict or sentence was announced.

The OPC's Freedom of the Press Committee protested the arrest of Bahari in Iran and countless other journalists held by the Iranian government in recent years and wrote in a June 24 letter: "...whatever the outcome of the current electoral dispute, no good can result to your country from continuing the increasingly heavy-handed repression of journalists who are trying to report these events to the world."

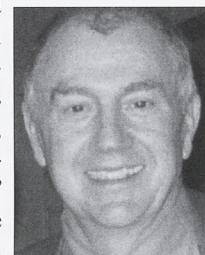


Boris Bergant, left, and Erhard Busek.

**VIENNA:** Boris Bergant, a pioneer broadcaster who was born in Maribor, Slovenia, is the 2009 winner of the Dr. Erhard Busek award for better understanding in South East Europe. The award is presented by the South East Europe Media Organ-

ization. Long involved in issues of national minorities, Bergant, 61, has worked for the European Broadcasting Union in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe. He established the TV production "Minorities: The Wealth of Europe;" co-founded in 1983 Alpa Adria, the oldest European trans-border radio and TV project still in operation; and in 1999 co-organized the independent RTK Kosovo.

**WASHINGTON:** Ten U.S. editors and producers spent 12 days in Peru during November on fellowships awarded by the International Reporting Project of The John Hopkins University of Advanced International Studies. "Peru faces many critical issues confronting much of Latin America — environmental and health concerns, indigenous people's rights, political and economic stability," said director of the program and an OPC member **John**



John Schidlovsky

Schidlovsky.

The fellows who interviewed Peruvian leaders on those problems are **David Baron**, health and science editor, PRI/BBC's "The World;" **Tom Barton**, editorial page editor, *Savannah Morning News*; **David Birdwell**, national/foreign editor, *Seattle Times*; **Sean Carberry**, supervising senior producer, America Abroad Media; **Matthew Clark**, staff editor, international news, *Christian Science Monitor*; **Rafael Cores**, business news editor, Univision.com; **Toni Johnson**, staff writer and editor, CFR.org; **Lauren Keane**, investigative projects website editor, *The Washington Post*; **Peter Spielmann**, supervisor/editor, North America desk, Associated Press; and **Francine Uenuma**, senior news video editor, Washington Post Digital.

**YANGON, Myanmar:** Two Burmese journalists were among more than 7,000 prisoners released in

(Continued on Page 8)



(Continued From Page 7)

September under an amnesty granted by Burma's junta. They were **Eint Khaing Oo** of the newspaper *Ecovision* and freelancer **Kyaw Kyaw Thant**. Both were imprisoned in June 2008, reportedly for taking survivors of the May 2008 cyclone to the U.N. office in Yangon. **David Dodge**, director of the International Press Institute, said 12 journalists remain in Burmese detention. "The junta must immediately release all of these journalists and allow them to report freely and independently," Dodge said.

### WEDDINGS

In Hong Kong when they met in 2005, **Kate Linebaugh** worked for *The Wall Street Journal* and **Alex Ortolani** was a Henry Luce Foundation scholar. They now are reporters covering the auto industry in Detroit, she for *The Journal* and he for Bloomberg. Kate, 38, and Alex, 31, were married September 26 by a U.S. district judge on Belle Isle, a Detroit park.



Two correspondents based in Beijing, **Tini Tran**, 38, of AP and **Edward Wong**, 36, of *The New York Times*, were married in Beijing September 18 at the Beijing Civil Affairs Marriage Bureau. The next day, the couple's parents, who live in the United States, led a spiritual ceremony at the Songzhu Temple in Beijing.

Tran and Wong met in 2004 while on assignment in Iraq. The bride earned degrees in journalism and political science at the University of Texas, Austin, the bridegroom earned degrees in journalism and international studies at the University of Virginia

and a master's degree at the University of California, Berkeley.

### PEOPLE REMEMBERED

**James Fry**, husband of OPC Executive Director **Sonya K. Fry**, died of cardiac arrest on October 19. Suffering from Alzheimer disease, Jim was moved from their Brooklyn residence to Cobble Hill Nursing Home on September 29, and he died in the emergency room at Long Island College Hospital across the street from the nursing home. He also leaves behind his daughter Rebecca and son Jamie. For many years, Jim was a maritime/corporate lawyer for an oil company. A full obituary will be published in the December OPC *Bulletin*.



Nan Robertson

**Nan Robertson** was a correspondent for several newspapers in Europe, a *New York Times* reporter for 33 years, a reformed alcoholic, victim of a disease that cost her the tips of eight fingers, a Pulitzer Prize winner, an author and a professor of journalism. Suffering from heart disease, she died October 13 in Rockville, Maryland at 83. After graduating in journalism from Northwestern University in 1948, Robertson worked in Europe for several newspapers including *The Milwaukee Journal* and the Paris edition of *The New York Herald Tribune*. She joined *The Times* in 1955 and before retiring in 1988 worked in the paper's New York, Washington and Paris bureaus.

Alcoholism forced her to leave the Paris bureau and return to New York for treatment in 1976. In one of her books, Robertson wrote, "I began drinking seriously when I was 22, just out of college and beginning my

career as a newspaperwoman. My generation of newspaper people consisted of two-fisted drinkers. In the circles I moved in, drinking was not just socially acceptable, it was an emblem of maturity." Her drinking worsened after the death of her second husband in 1971. Her first marriage ended in divorce and her third husband died in 2006. Robertson stopped drinking after undergoing treatment. In 1981, she fell ill with toxic shock syndrome, gangrene set in and the end joints of all eight fingers were amputated, only the thumbs were saved. She won a 1983 Pulitzer for feature writing with an article about that illness published in *The New York Times Magazine*. After retiring from *The Times*, she taught journalism at the University of Maryland and elsewhere.

Robertson wrote two books, *Getting Better: Inside Alcoholics Anonymous* and *The Girls in the Balcony: Women, Men and The New York Times*, a chronicle of the fight for workplace parity by *The Times* female employees.

**Douglas Watt** sped through high school and graduated from Cornell University at age 19. He then went to work in 1934 as a copy boy in the drama department at the New York *Daily News*. In the U.S. Army during World War II, he was a *Stars and Stripes* correspondent in Okinawa. Watt returned to the *Daily News* after the war as a



Douglas Watt

theater reporter and critic until his retirement in 1993, 59 years after joining the newspaper. He also wrote about opera and classical music for the *New Yorker* and about New York night life in both publications. Stricken with pneumonia, Watt died September 29 in Southampton, New York at age 95.



## Robert Benjamin, Last Founding Member of the OPC, Dies at 92

**Robert S. Benjamin**, 92, who started his career as a foreign correspondent at age 15 and was the last survivor among the correspondents who founded the OPC 70 years ago, died in his sleep at his home in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico on September 20. In 1939 as World War II started, Benjamin and 12 other correspondents founded the OPC. In 1940, Benjamin chaired the Club's first dinner, an event that marked publication of *The Inside Story*, a book written by OPC members. In 1998, he founded the OPC's Robert Spiers Benjamin Award for best reporting in any medium on Latin America. Over the past six years, Benjamin suffered from debilitating dementia, limiting his passions for traveling, reading, writing and playing Scrabble.

With money earned from writing travel articles for *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Voyager* and other publications, Benjamin, then 15, sailed to Europe on a tramp ship and wired stories to United Press on events that led to the Spanish Civil War. At 16, he sailed to South America. His travel articles, many published in *The New York Times*, reported on the expansion of aviation in Honduras, the Panama Canal, ice-breaking vessels off New York's Fire Island, Mexico, the Bahamas, Yankees in Malaysia and the opening of the Pan American Highway.

In 1934, the *Brooklyn Eagle* described Benjamin, then 17, as a "youthful veteran globetrotter, journalist, explorer, photographer, and author of two books who has explored out-of-the-way places in South America, rummaged in hidden corners in the West Indies, seen Labrador and taken pictures on several continents, while he quietly pursues his studies here at Erasmus Hall."

During World War II, Benjamin served as an intelligence officer in the U. S. War Department, assigned to Chile and Argentina to monitor Nazi espionage operations and capturing German spies. His other posts included staff writer for the *Panama Star & Herald*; assistant editor at Dodd, Meade and Company; Time-Life bureau chief in Chile, where he was cor-



**OPC Founders Fay Gillis Wells and Bob Benjamin share a toast at the 1999 Awards Dinner.**

respondent for *Time*, *Life* and *Fortune*, and McGraw-Hill World News; director of Latin American operations for *Vision* magazine; *New York Times* correspondent in Mexico; and founder of his own press agency, Inter-American Press Service, and his own public relations firm. His first wife, **Dorothy (Dottie) Calhoun**, whom he married in Santiago, Chile, in 1945, died in 1961, and he married three more times. Benjamin's books included *Call to Adventure* (1934), *The Vacation Guide* (1940) and *I'm an American* (1941), which includes interviews with famous naturalized Americans.

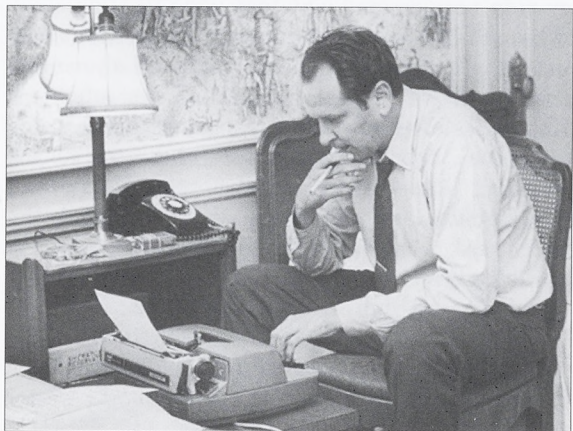
In his memory, donations can be made to Alma, a home for the elderly in San Miguel. Contributions should be sent to Alma, Jacarandas No. 158, La Lejona, San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Codigo Postal 37790, Mexico.

**William Safire** was proud that he dropped out of college in 1949 after his second year at Syracuse University. He then took a job with **Tex McCray**, a columnist for *The New York Herald Tribune*. In 1951, Safire was a correspondent in Europe and the Middle East for the

New York City station WNBC-TV. During part of his U.S. Army service, 1952 to 1954, he was a reporter for the Armed Forces Radio Network in Europe during which he interviewed Ingrid Bergman and Lucky Luciano within a few hours of each other in Naples. As a public relations man, Safire organized the 1959 Nixon-Khrushchev "kitchen debate" in Moscow on capitalism vs. communism. After working in the Nixon White House as a speech writer, Safire joined *The New York Times* in 1973 as an op-ed writer. His conservative columns, of which he wrote more than 3,000 installments, were syndicated in hundreds of newspapers. He won the 1978 Pulitzer Prize for commentary with columns that accused Bert

Lance, President Carter's budget director, of shady financial deals. Lance resigned but was acquitted. From 1979 until this September, Safire wrote the column "On Language" for *The New York Times Magazine*. His writing rules included never split an infinitive, avoid mixing metaphors, proof read carefully to see if you can leave words out, avoid clichés and don't overuse exclamation marks. He wrote four novels. Born in New York City in 1929, Safire, 79, died of pancreatic cancer September 27 in a Rockville, Maryland hospice.

**Len Saffir**, OPC president from 1988 to 1990, wrote in his Florida community newspapers: "I lost a good friend [Safire] going back to the '60s. During the course of our life times, we both toiled in the vineyards of politics, public relations and journalism [as foreign correspondents]... Bill was a good man, a smart man and a fun man."



**Safire in 1968, working for President Nixon.**



# Kapuściński's International Impact on Today's Journalists

**EVENT RECAP: After Kapuściński, October 6-7**

by David Varno

The two-day symposium at New York University October 6-7, *After Kapuściński: The Art of Reportage* produced a remarkable discussion on the subject of narrative nonfiction. Questions that persist through the chain of literary movements in shifting standards for journalism, such as the function of the "I," where to find the narrative, verisimilitude in fiction vs. nonfiction, what constitutes plagiarism, an institution's responsibility to its writers, and the privilege earned by journalists forced to take new risks in the present day were given urgent, lucid consideration.

As moderator, National Book Critics Circle President and OPC Secretary Jane Ciabattari noted in her introduction to the first panel, "The Art of Reportage: On the Ground and On the Page," Ryszard Kapuściński has "inspired the work of journalists and narrative nonfiction writers and memoirists around the world." As many English readers, she first discovered him in the journal *Granta*, which featured essays and interviews. His most well known works are perhaps *Travels With Herodotus* and *The Emperor: Downfall of an Autocrat*.

At the introduction, Ciabattari read a brief letter from OPC member Vivienne Walt, with *Time* magazine in Paris:

"...when I discovered *Another Day of Life* while I was in Luanda covering the Angolan war in the late 1980s, I was so shaken to the core I could barely do any interviews — after reading that, what was the point? Every piece of journalism seemed rather pathetic. He's been an inspiration ever since — there's a special section of my bookshelf where I have all his books. Bravo for organizing this."

Ciabattari went on to suggest what today's readers are looking for in nonfiction: "We live in a time of paradox, when news of a bombing in Mumbai filters out in 140-character Twitter bursts, yet readers yearn for long-form narratives that provide context, meaning, and sublime imaginative leaps."

The symposium was enriched by participants like Pawel Smoleński, Wojciech Jagielski and Wiktor Osiatynski from Poland, each of whom detailed their journalistic remembrances and the ways in which they were inspired, but the discussion was really about Kapuściński's international impact. Monica Fabijańska, director of the Polish Cultural Institute, stressed the need in a global world for translators of culture to provide exchange where governments fall short. "I'm particularly happy that this discussion will be international," she said, and one had a sense that the global journalism community was tuned in.

Participating at the first panel were Pawel Smolenski, Joshua Clark, Eliza Griswold, Arif Jamal, and Elizabeth Rubin, and the first question called upon them to discuss how they came to their subjects, their experience "on the ground," and as individuals, how they put themselves into



Zygmunt Malinowski

First panel participants from left: Joshua Clark, Eliza Griswold, Arif Jamal, Kinga Kosmala, Pawel Smolenski and Elizabeth Rubin.

the landscape of their stories.

Pawel Smolenski, author of *Hell in Paradise*, a series of articles on post-Saddam Iraq, was first to respond to the question of how he comes to find his subjects "on the ground," how he puts himself into the landscape of his stories. For Smolenski, it started in finding out from his translator in Baghdad "what is mutual that he and I have," and concluded that "even though our lives are so different, we both spent them in an authoritarian country."

Joshua Clark, author of *Heart Like Water*, a memoir of Hurricane Katrina that was a finalist for the NBCC award in autobiography, stated that from Kapuściński he learned the value of the truth found in the devices of fiction.

Eliza Griswold, author of the forthcoming *The Tenth Parallel: Dispatches From The Fault Line Between Christianity and Islam*, found her expectations to do a typical travelogue thwarted over the course of the seven-year project, as she found herself along a faith-based fault line that runs for nearly 9,000 miles across Africa and Asia and 2,000 years of history.

And while Arif Jamal, author of *The Shadow War: The Untold Story of Jihad In Kashmir*, struggled with the inability to tell the whole story, *New York Times* journalist Elizabeth Rubin, who was embedded with a helicopter unit in Iraq, found herself searching for meaning in the senselessness, as the soldiers she was with engaged in a battle they didn't understand why they were fighting.

Asked how Rubin found the narrative for a recent *New York Times Magazine* piece "Karzai in His Labyrinth," she explained how she discovered during the interview process Karzai's ability to tell a great story; she became fascinated by the Afghan president as a character, by his ability to cry, his little-boy emotional state, and his desire to get out of power amidst unpopularity. She took the story further to ask what the United States keeping him in power says about Americans.

The event was co-sponsored by the Polish Cultural Institute in New York, the National Book Critics Circle, the New York Institute for Humanities at NYU, and the Literary Reportage concentration of the Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute at NYU, in association with the OPC and Worlds Without Borders.



# Listening to LeBlanc: Wistful Reflections on Times Long Gone

## OPINION

by David Holmberg

Gay Talese cried at Yale.

*The Yale Daily News* revealed that the other day. The distinguished college newspaper reported that the distinguished author/journalist was reacting to a discussion at Yale on the precarious state of print journalism in the digital age.

I didn't shed any tears over Adrian Nicole LeBlanc's presentation at New York University on October 6. She spoke at the Kapuściński symposium on literary reportage that drew an attentive crowd, primarily NYU students. But I certainly teetered on the brink of depression after hearing LeBlanc, the author of *Random Family*, the instant classic on the American underclass set in the Bronx, talk about her latest long-term, long-form reporting project.

LeBlanc has spent seven years working on a book about stand-up comics. She spent ten years on *Random Family*, practically living on a block on Tremont Avenue and becoming so close to some of the neighborhood women that she accompanied them on visits to social service agencies.

LeBlanc, who is 45, may be the pre-eminent practitioner of literary reportage of her generation. You might call her the High Priestess of Print, and as an old print guy I worship of her work.

I assigned her book and sang her praises to my journalism classes at NYU and Drew University when I taught there, and she's become a role model for young journalists and journalism students New York. There was a good turnout at NYU, probably in 2004, when I heard her speak for the first time. That was before the full impact of the digital revolution was felt, and I listened with admiration and respect to her talk about the methodology and mystique of *Random Family*. There were no magic tricks, of course. She spoke of the hard times and the exhilarating times during a decade of rigorous work.

I put her on a pedestal, with good reason, but I did not feel any contextual regrets, any pangs of despair, over an evolving disparity between where print journalism was headed and what LeBlanc had worked for and accomplished.

Last Wednesday was another story. LeBlanc spoke about her

book in progress, explaining the complicated dynamic between her and her comedian subjects (she's observed them for so long they've come to depend on her presence). She talked about her literary/journalistic agonizing over what she ultimately wants to say in this new and characteristically ambitious book. She also revealed that early in this project she suffered a "paralytic depression" that eventually lifted, but hampered her work.

But, sad to say, listening to LeBlanc this time made me think of my couple friends in the *Los Angeles Times* Washington bureau, both forced to take buyouts ten years too early in their illustrious careers; of my former wife, a talented veteran of Gene Roberts' golden days at the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, losing her feature editor's job at a scrappy small paper owned by *The Bergen Record*; of my own regional stringer's gig at *The New York Times* ending when the edition folded last March.

I thought, in other words, of the enormous career toll the digital revolution has taken on print journalists, while LeBlanc's pressed on in her seven-year quest (thus far) to match her earlier achievement that set her permanently apart from the rest of us. I don't in any way begrudge her her unique professional position, and it was not her job in that NYU talk to deal with the shaky larger world of print journalism. I just wish we hadn't reached the point in print where I thought of LeBlanc and her stunning work in this disturbing contemporary context that made Gay Talese cry at Yale.



Adrian Nicole LeBlanc

*David Holmberg was a reporter for New York Newsday and a former senior editor of The Village Voice. His work has also appeared in The Nation and The Times Magazine.*

## New Books: (Continued From Page 12)

introduction to his illustrated book *Gourmet Getaways: 50 Top Spots to Cook and Learn* [Guilford, Connecticut: Globe Pequot Press]. David writes about cooking schools from Connecticut to California and spices his accounts with recipes picked up at the schools. David started writing about cooking schools abroad in the '90s. He became excited when his publisher asked him to write a book about cooking-school getaways in the U.S. "I saw it as an opportunity to travel the U.S. and to devote some major time to a subject I love very much." David has written about American and international cuisine for several publications including the *Christian Science Monitor*, reported on National Public Radio and written four books. Traveling the globe in search of the perfect meal for decades, David has supported his food habit by teaching school, working in public relations, marketing and magazine advertising, and writing.

**DO YOU FIND YOURSELF IN TROUBLE ORGANIZING** a report, writing introductory letters and proposals, and at a loss for words in open discussions? Then *Professional Expression: To Organize, Write, and Manage Technical Communication* [Houston, Texas: Momentum Press] by OPC member **M. D. (Dan) Morris** is for you. "This is a reader friendly guide for professionals, business experts, and students," the publisher wrote. "He writes from four decades of experience as a writer, an editor and a teacher. Morris gives examples of good and bad communication from real work and student production." Morris, an engineer, has edited books and journals and taught communications for administrators in the MBA program at Cornell University.

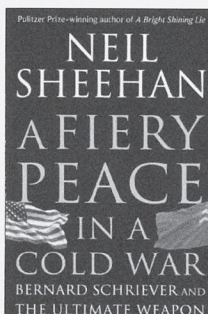
— by Al Kaff



# New Books

## GLOBAL

**IT TOOK NEIL SHEEHAN 16 YEARS** to research, write and finish *A Bright Shining Lie*, his 1988 book about the Vietnam War that won a Pulitzer Prize and a National Book Award. He spent 15 years on his newest book, *A Fiery Peace in a Cold War: Bernard Schriever and the Ultimate Weapon* [New York: Random House]. Sheehan told **Charles McGrath** of *The New York Times*, "I'm a slow researcher and a slower writer. I've never been able to use a research assistant. If I don't do my own reporting, I don't get a feel for the subject." Sheehan starts writing before dinner and continues far into the night.



*A Fiery Peace in a Cold War* is a history of the arms race and America's effort to create a nuclear stalemate with the Soviet Union. The central figure in the book is retired Air Force General Bernard Schriever, who lived about eight blocks from Sheehan's Washington, D.C. residence.

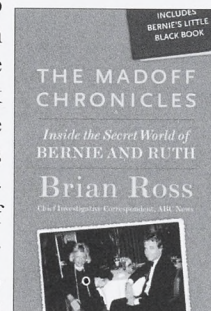
Sheehan adjusted his night schedule so he could interview Schriever on Saturday mornings before the general headed off for a round of golf. Schriever, who died in 2005, led the creation of America's Intercontinental ballistic missile system. The book covers the end of World War II, the rise of Stalin, the Cold War and the space race. Sheehan covered the Vietnam War for two years with UPI and then one year with *The New York Times*.

## NORTH AMERICA

**"I'M IN THE FBI OFFICE** and I'm handcuffed to a chair." That's what Bernard Madoff told his lawyer in a telephone call December 11, 2008, shortly after his arrest in the biggest financial crime in Wall Street history. **Brian Ross**, chief investigative correspondent for ABC News, has covered the Madoff scandal since it broke and has written *The Madoff Chronicles: Inside the Secret World of Bernie and Ruth* [New York: Hyperion], published in hard cover and as an eBook.

Ross has reported on secret CIA prisons in Eastern Europe, international nuclear smuggling and human rights abuses in China, Saipan and the Congo. He has won numerous honors including five OPC awards and 12 Emmys. In his book, Ross calls Madoff's operation "a classic Ponzi scheme that would have made its namesake, Charles Ponzi, proud... Ponzi's scheme collapsed in less than a year. Madoff's scheme ran for decades, fooling government regulators and financial experts."

The publisher summarized the book, "Madoff claimed to have stolen fifty billion dollars; the sum seemed impossibly large. But of course it wasn't impossible. And that was only the beginning of the story... Ross chronicles the lavish lifestyle that Bernie and his high-school sweetheart, Ruth, enjoyed as the result of his ill-gotten gains and the bone-deep deceit that shocked the world with its sheer audacity. He details the layers of Madoff's scheme — from money men across the country who made millions convincing clients to entrust their wealth to Madoff, to the fabricated stock trades and false quarterly statements that fooled his victims, many of whom lost their savings, their homes, some of them even their lives, in the wake of Madoff's betrayal."



One reviewer wrote that in their research, Ross and his team cultivated sources deep within the walls of Bernard L. Madoff Investment Securities "that no other journalist has reached."

**"AT AN AGE WHEN MANY OF MY** colleagues were following a sensible career path to glory and riches, I was traveling the world eating." That is what OPC member **Joe David** writes in the

(Continued on Page 11)

## Coming Up...

**"The Road"**  
Film Screening  
October 29, 7 p.m.

**Berlin Wall Panel**  
November 9, 6 p.m.

**Book Night & AP Tour**  
November 10, 6 p.m.

Overseas Press Club of America  
40 West 45 Street  
New York, NY 10036 USA